

VIKAS SAMVAD

Annual Report 2014-2015

Theme I: Nutrition & Health

1. The POSHAN Initiative

The initiative, POSHAN (**P**artnership and **O**pportunities to **S**trengthen and **H**armonize **A**ctions for **N**utrition in India), is led by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and is supported by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It is a 4-year initiative that aims to build evidence on effective actions for nutrition and support the use of evidence in decision making. Vikas Samvad is amongst the partner constituents in this initiative with other organisations including 'Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)' 'One World South Asia', 'Coalition for Sustainable Nutrition Security in India', 'Save the Children, India', 'Public Health Resource Network (PHRN)', 'Vatsalya' and the 'Centre for Equity Studies'. The overall goal POSHAN is to improve and support policy and programme decisions and actions to accelerate reductions in maternal and child undernutrition in India, through an inclusive process of evidence synthesis, knowledge generation and knowledge mobilization.

POSHAN has two objectives:

1. Analyse direct and indirect nutrition-relevant interventions to generate knowledge on optimal approaches to address major bottlenecks to improve maternal and child nutrition outcomes in India; and
2. Mobilise evidence-based and actionable knowledge to inform policy formulation and support programme for nutrition.

POSHAN's Priority Thematic Areas

- Inter-sectoral convergence between ICDS and health to deliver direct nutrition interventions, especially in the context of ICDS restructuring and emerging nutrition missions
- Assessing multi-sectoral planning and action for nutrition in India in different contexts
- Strengthening evidences for implementing essential nutrition interventions at scale
- Strengthening the generation and use of data to track nutrition status as well as to generate operational evidence on how to improve programme implementation and uptake.

Vikas Samvad has undertaken a two-pronged approach across the thematic areas under the POSHAN. The first dimension pertains to development and dissemination of training material on nutrition. It includes printing and dissemination of training material on malnutrition via the following 6 manuals:

1. Malnutrition Primer (English) and "Kuposhan Praveshika" (कुपोषण प्रवेशिका) (Hindi)

2. Primers on Integrated Community based Management of Malnutrition (English) and “Kuposhan ka Samuday Adharit Prabandhan” (कुपोषण का समुदाय आधारित प्रबंधन) (Hindi)
3. Primer on Childhood Diseases
4. Documentation on Knowledge, Attitude and Behaviour (KAP): KAP-Outcome Framework (English) and “Gyan, Pravritti aur Vyavhar Dastavez” (ज्ञान, प्रवृत्ति और व्यवहार दस्तावेज) (Hindi)
5. Primers on Growth Monitoring: Growth Monitoring and promotion Primer (English) and “Bacchon ki Vriddhi Nigrani” (बच्चों की वृद्धि निगरानी) (Hindi)
6. Primer on Social Audit of ICDS and Health Services
7. Other documentations include the following:
 1. Primer on Crèche focusing on the care of the children at care centres in terms of their health and nutrition
 2. Identification of issues of ICDS, MDM, and maternal Entitlements as emerging from divisional level meetings
 3. Suggestions drafted to incorporate focus on the concerned issues in the implementation rules of national Food security Act.
 4. Follow up visits to Khandwa and Shivpuri districts
 5. Documentation and articles on inter-relationship of malnutrition and TB.
 6. Document focusing the concept of Public Health Nutrition (Hindi)
 7. Kit on “Malnutrition for Media and People’s Representatives”

The second dimension pertains to enabling the setting up of a Knowledge Forum (Poshan Samvad) at the district and sub-district levels. It is contemplated that the Knowledge Forum would provide for and facilitate continuing dialogues that can increase the knowledge and morale of the field-level service providers who play vital roles in improving public health and nutrition, and would afford a newer dimension for developing their professional competence. It is believed that a heightened sense of confidence can be instilled among these crucial functionaries by sharing the latest information and studies in the field of nutrition and public health.

The Forum is an enabling mechanism for process-centric consultations amongst the frontline service providers and those with their related stakeholders so that they may gain

knowledgeable and articulated shared insights into the immediate and underlying challenges which they often confront in their work routines and that they rather find themselves wanting and vulnerable in their ability to achieve informed resolution in addressing them.

The first phase of deliberations at the Knowledge Forum had covered a total of 6 meetings spanned over a period of one year in year 2013-14. These consultations were held at Shivpuri, Khandwa and Gwalior bringing together as many as 137 Anganwadi Workers, 49 Supervisors, 42 Child Development Project Officers and 1 Joint Director. Together, these functionaries came forth to render a worthy first-hand account of their ground-level perceptions and experiences pertaining to the issue of malnutrition and its eradication.

“Sharing the Untold Insights on Nutrition for Public Health: Knowledge Forums in Nutrition (Poshan Samvad – पोषण संवाद -) in Madhya Pradesh” is the September 2014 report on the Forum which has been put together by Vikas Samvad. Published by POSHAN, the report elucidates this strategic action which has been underway in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The report identifies the broad dimensions and options pertaining to the initiation (first phase) of the Knowledge Forum in the State with a view to rendering a platform for the frontline workers who are engaged in the domains of nutrition and public health so that they are able to come together to freely share and discuss ideas, perceptions, reflections, problems, prospects, issues, and concerns around the formidable challenge of combating malnutrition in the State. The forum has been aptly termed as ‘Poshan Samvad’ in Hindi.

Recognising that the Poshan Samvad has significant potential in supporting the interface between the community and the program management architecture by way of continued empowerment of the frontline workers and that it also helps in informing the policymaking, program design, implementation and monitoring functions at middle and top management levels apart from promoting action research, the process of dialogue has been continued in year 2014-15 as part of phase II deliberations. A total of 4 deliberations were held in the second phase of the Poshan Samvad during the year 2014-15 which engaged with as many as 73 Anganwadi Workers, 12 ICDS Supervisors and 28 Child Development Project Officers from the ICDS and as many as 96 keen journalists. These 2 consultations were held as follows:

1. **“Challenges & Prospects” held at Bhopal on 7th July 2014:** It brought together 26 recently recruited Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) from 12 districts of Madhya Pradesh
2. **“Nutrition Knowledge Forum with Media Persons” held Chanderi from 23rd August 2014 to 25th August 2014:** It brought together a total of 96 journalists from across Madhya Pradesh and 6 other states.

3. **“Nutrition Knowledge Forum” held at Pohri Block, district Shivpuri on 7th October 2014:** It brought together 25 Anganwadi Workers, 4 ICDS Supervisors and 1 Child Development Project Officer.
4. **“Nutrition Knowledge Platform” held at Baihar Block of tribal dominated Balaghat district on 26th November 2014:** It brought together 48 Anganwadi Workers, 8 ICDS Supervisors and 1 Child Development Project Officer.

Salient Take Away Messages

The key take away messages emanating from the entirety of Poshan Samvad consultations at the Knowledge Forums evoke deep interest in refreshing the programmatic interventions and their management. The messages also indicate the kind of requisite priority actions towards securing sustained inter-sector collaboration and convergence aimed at facilitating mutual learning and enhancing sector-wide joint performance. These messages span across the themes of enabling and sustaining the mechanism of Knowledge Forum, Use of Fact Sheets, Primers and Reference Materials, Thrust on Gender and Rights Perspective, Promotion of Evidence-based Best Practices, Programme Management and Governance and Inter-sector Convergence. A few select messages across the thematic areas are listed below:

- The Knowledge Forum (Poshan Samvad) may have pronounced accent on facilitating open and free discussions amongst the participants so as to help in identifying solutions to issues at the local level and provide directions for programmatic and policy improvements at the State and national levels.
- The Forum shall render perceptions on a range of issues, challenges, successes and failures confronting public health and nutrition in the community.
- The Forum shall filter out and consolidate best practices and lessons learned for future adaptation and scale up across the state and the country.
- It would be a formal structure at the behest of the Department of Women & Child Development. It would essentially function at the sub-district (Community Development Block) level and have participation from the sectorial departments. It should also have participation of Janpad and Gram Panchayats so as to also draw upon the perceptions and expectations of the elected representatives.
- Building up and dissemination of reference material and Fact Sheets on public health and nutrition is crucial for run up to the Knowledge Forum. Dialogue based on an informed analytics on inter-generational cycle of malnutrition and its wide prevalence and district-specific Fact Sheet sets the positive and constructive tone of consultations and helps create keen receptivity amongst the participants.

- When a Fact Sheet pertaining to the status of malnutrition is shared with the participants, it provides a clear dashboard to them as to the current situation and its analysis thereby creating an urge to look for the immediate, underlying and root factors so that contemplated change can be better thought through and pursued.
- Ignoring the nutrition and health of women in the milieu of their domestic and wage-work burden amounts to an assault on their human rights. Pregnancy aggravates this burden, and has implications for women's own healthy well-being and that of the newborns. It calls for a priority attention to the issue of maternity rights and entitlements.
- Despite the comparative labour being more pronounced and skewed against the women as compared to men, women's nutritional needs have been ignored. What alarms is that the tribal community too is now in the grip of growing gender disparity.
- There is an urgent need for securing consistent and continued observance of evidence-based practices of and for healthy and nutritional well-being of women and younger children.
- Many food items of tribal community are rich in medicinal value. There is significant potential of learning from the health practices of the tribal community. We can learn as to how the tribal community in earlier times had been meeting its food and nutrition needs straight from the natural sources and thus seek to re-establish the linkage between community and its erstwhile food security resources.
- There is need to trace the cultural and folk roots of the tribal community instead of merely perceiving and dismissing the tribal community as 'primitive, deprived and poor'.
- There is need to look at initiatives and interventions from the perspective of skilful and committed approaches and not just in terms of calls for higher budgetary allocations.
- Field functionaries need to be adequately resourced for managing programmatic interventions.
- There is a continuing need to widen and sharpen scientific and social insight on nutrition for project leads (the CDPOs) so that they may deliver their roles without any prejudice.
- Community is yet to be engaged on evidences pertaining to immediate, underlying and root causes of malnutrition. Although, now a system of the District Annual Action Plan has been instituted, nevertheless an incentivized beginning has yet to be made for taking up innovations at the community level and incorporating the same in the District Action Plan.
- The Anganwadi Workers have flagged the need to bring about change in the system of Supplementation Nutrition. They observe that the system of Take Home Ration (THR)

for children in the age group 6 months to 3 years does not reach the nutritious diet to them every day. They argue that it is common knowledge that when the THR packet is opened once, its entire quantity is cooked and one cannot save it for further helpings. Secondly, when the parents go for work, children cannot get food in accordance with their needs. This becomes a major cause of malnutrition, they opine.

- The Anganwadi Workers also drew attention to the need for flexibility to change in the menu of meal for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years in accordance with their liking.
- Workers also emphasised on the need for elaborate home visits. They said that at present, their duration for home visit is one hour. Some workers felt that the duration should be increased. They see tremendous value of the home visits in family counselling on issues of infant, child and maternal care.
- The CDPOs recognise that the issue and challenge of malnutrition requires the convergent action from the wide spectrum of stakeholders (the community, the functionaries of ICDS, health, agriculture, rural development-livelihood, public health engineering etc.) to engage with one another in a sector-wide approach.
- Malnutrition cannot be combated only through the architecture of Anganwadi Centres. The Anganwadi Workers believe that though the Anganwadi Centre is a significant step towards eradicating malnutrition but what is required is to look at the complete chain of availability of food within the households, arrangements for availability of ration from public distribution shops and employment for work. They cited important determinants including education and social gender disparity which have a bearing on wide spread prevalence of women's anaemia.
- Issues of functionality of Gram Aarogya Kendras (GAKs) – ग्राम आरोग्य केन्द्र - and community interface with Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) need convergent attention by health and ICDS at programme planning and management level.

2. Resource Partnership with Child Rights and You (CRY)

A host of activities across a spectrum of nutrition, health and allied and cross-cutting areas have been undertaken in accordance with an agreed Plan of Action. The programmatic activities related to nutrition and health have been as follows:

- ❖ Six short media assignments have been granted to the mainstream media professionals on the issues of Nutrition Security for Tribal and Dalits. They have flowcharted their research work and are readying with their reports. They have been covering the relevant news well. 15 stories and articles have got published in different newspapers.
- ❖ Vikas Samvad's field organization, Community Development Centre, Balaghat initiated a 12-Day Nutrition programme, "Suposhan Abhiyan" (सुपोषण अभियान).

- ❖ Besides, feeding demonstration programme has been taken up which is a very effective activity at the community level. The process of feeding demonstration starts with discussion on available foods at the home and the existing practice of preparing the food. Home visit is another set of activity which is emphasised upon. The field staff worked in close association with the Anganwadi Workers in this campaign.
- ❖ Fact finding field visits on issues of child health and nutrition and fundamental issues of related to child rights were undertaken towards raising critical and policy issues of health and nutrition, poverty, exclusion of children, women, and marginalized communities in Madhya Pradesh. This people-centric advocacy has been aimed to help the local people/organization in raising their issues at district, state level as well as at the national level.
- ❖ Info-pack on SAM has been prepared on its operational guidelines, specific protocols and treatment modes. Vikas Samvad being a member of the Core Committee constituted by National Health Mission, MP on treatment of Severe Acute Malnourished (SAM) children, this will go a long way in propagating the protocols.
- ❖ A diet chart and nutrition sheet has been prepared for children under different age group on the basis of the RDA for different age group. The chart presents the information of RDA, Food group distribution and balanced dietary intake with nutrient contents for children under 6.
- ❖ A district media forum was organized in Barwani focusing on the health of woman and children on the basis of the facts of the National Family Health Survey. 25 journalists participated in the meeting.
- ❖ Following last year's activity of sending a letter to the newly/pre-/post-elected MLAs for discussing the child rights and related issues whereby they have been called upon to give their consent to be the part of the process, the facilitation process to sensitize them on child health and nutrition related issues has been continued in this year too. A kit incorporating data related to malnutrition, IMR, MMR, U5MR, NMR, MTPs, anaemia, breast-feeding Practices, poverty, maternal deaths, undernutrition, education, Child Sex Ratio, child population, sources of drinking water, and sanitation etc. has been prepared for being shared with them.
- ❖ A media kit was generated on malnutrition aiming to provide information not only related to the concept, status and legal provisions, but also about how malnutrition can be combated in the community itself. This kit is also amenable for being shared with MLAs too.
- ❖ A set of publications have been brought out as follows:
 - Publication (Hindi) on "Poshan and Matrutva Hak" (पोषण और मातृत्व हक) - (Defining Nutrition Rights and Maternity Entitlements) under the National Food Security Act.
 - ✓ Info Alert notes were prepared on diseases and treatment seeking behavior and nutrition and health status of woman and children in the state after analysis of Annual Health Survey on:

- “Madhya Pradesh mein Bachhon aur Mahilaon ka Poshan aur Swasthya” (मध्यप्रदेश में बच्चों और महिलाओं का पोषण और स्वास्थ्य)
- “Bharat mein Teevra aur Gambheer Beemariyan” (भारत में तीव्र और गंभीर बीमारियां)

Around 200 alerts have since been released.

3. Partnership with MP Lok Sangharsh Sajha Manch (MPLSSM)

In accordance with the agreed plan of action for the year, the following major activities were planned in the domains of public health and nutrition:

- ICDS and Mid-Day Meal Assessment: Preparation of status report towards effective advocacy for implementation of meal scheme.
- Follow up of Health Care Report with the department of Health, monitoring body of the national Health Mission, NHRC, NCPCR, SHRC and SCPCR.
- Orientation of MPLSSM members on perspective of right to health and use of Health Care Manual for mother and child health care.
- Survey of Health Care Services, preparation of survey report and conduct of State consultation meet with key stakeholders.

Following outcomes were realised during the year 2014-15:

- 13th special edition of “Sajhi Baat” on children’s participation was published. The edition was developed based on creative writings and sketches by children themselves. It focus on nutrition and health, amongst others.
- In collaboration with MP Jan Swasthya Abhiyan and MP Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Health Consultation Meet was organised. About 80 persons from the government, civil society organisations and health activists participated in the deliberations. The Health Manual was released at the meet.
- The maternal and child health status survey findings were shared.
- Response to draft Health Policy 2015 of the Government of India was formulated and shared. The feedback on suggestions was uploaded on the website of the GoI Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and also sent to the Hon. Health Minister and others.
- Facilitated in the release of grants of Rs. 3 lakhs each to the next of deceased due to silicosis for 4 families in district Panna.
- As part of survey, counselling was done for parents of malnourished children and encouraging them to shift the SAM children to Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre.
- Promoted institutional deliveries and immunisation of children for those living in areas having proximity to stone mining in district Panna.

4. Partnership with Hifazat

Whilst Hifazat addresses the issues related to child protection, from a cross-cutting sector perspective, it has also been giving attention to the needs of child care. Accordingly, it has flagged the issue of review of drugs and additives in the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act whilst offering recommendation to the amendment to Juvenile Justice Act so that health of children receives comprehensive attention. Likewise, it has called for articulating the term “best interests of children” and has sought a focus on the child rights perspective rather than just on the ‘welfare’ aspect.

5. Public Discourse on Key Issues of Children & Women – Cooperation Agreement with UNICEF

A cooperation agreement has been reached between the UNICEF and Vikas Samvad in the reporting year with regard to the project on “Public Discourse on Key Issues of Children & Women” for the period March 2015 to December 2015. The cooperation is within the ambit of Master Plan of Operations as is in place between the Government of India and UNICEF for the period 2013-2017. The project aims the following results:

Result 1: Increased visibility of issues in media and call to action on areas of child health, nutrition and education. Seeking to bring about increased concern, the result shall focus the following themes:

- High neonatal mortality
- Open defecation and provision for safe drinking water
- Implementation of Right to Education (RTE) Act in securing right to quality education for children, for both girls and boys.
- Child marriage.

Result 2: Document strategic successes, failures and challenges by collating case studies from field, both within the community and at its interface with the service delivery mechanism and mobilise media on these thematic areas.

6. Bridging the Digital Divide: an Initiative for Digital Empowerment

This initiative has been taken up by Vikas Samvad with support from Ford Foundation. It seeks to contribute positively in policy making processes in securing digital access, particularly to the poor. Recognising that digital divide has a profound impact on inclusive human development, the intervention shall go a long way in rendering ICT that can help in enhancing effectiveness in governance of health care, nutrition and education in meeting the information needs of the poor in rural and tribal areas. The 2-year long initiative is being implemented in 3 regions of Madhya Pradesh, namely, Mahakaushal, Malwa and Central. It focuses an intensive intervention in Dindori, Jhabua and Bhopal districts. In each district, 4 Gram (village) Panchayats have been taken up. The intervention includes activities across dimensions of capacity building, research and documentation and dissemination and advocacy.

Towards this end, a member of Vikas Samvad Team, Ms. Rolly Shivhare has undertaken an exposure visit to South Korea. Sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the visit has helped the team member to learn experiences on democratic processes in South Korea whilst she had

the opportunity to share her Madhya Pradesh experiences pertaining to **malnutrition, hunger**, displacement and poverty which have a marked impact on the marginalized sections of society in the state. She provided awareness various e-government services in the State and spoke on the available means which are used by the population groups to avail services and practice their rights. She also shared the efforts on advocacy being made in the state with regard to the uplift of marginalized sections of society. The documentary, “Life and Freedom” produced by Vikas Samvad was screened during the South Korea exposure visit.

Theme II - Child Protection

1. Partnership with Hifazat

The partnership dwells on the following programmatic areas related to the efficacious implementation of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) through advocacy and allied actions for addressing the issues of:

- Child protection and concomitant capacitating the functionality of institutions like Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU),
- Children in need of care and protection with special reference to missing children,
- Children in need of care and protection with special reference to children having taken to begging; and
- Children in need of care and protection with special reference to children living off on railway platforms.

Towards these ends, the following activities have been undertaken:

- Conduct of half Yearly coordination/orientation meetings in 8 districts of Madhya Pradesh, namely Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Shivpuri, Sheopur, Shahdol, Bhopal and Betul on the Juvenile Justice System.
- Advocacy on formation and strengthening of Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU) in the concerned districts.
- Documentation of best practices.
- Facilitate the cases which are reported from field by various project members and assist them in documenting these individual cases.
- Formation of Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) where they are absent and strengthening of CWCs where in existence.
- Advocacy for the formation of Block level Child Protection Committees (BCPCs) and Village level Child Protection Committees (VCPCs).
- Appraising the status of the ICPS structure in Madhya Pradesh.
- Sharing of the report on the status of missing children in Madhya Pradesh.
- Orientation on different perspectives and dynamics of missing children in context with the cases which emerged during the last year’s study done by Hifazat.
- The members and organizations mobilized the parents for appearing at the departmental public hearings at district level.

- Voices raises through rally protests by community and alliance etc. at district level.
- Development of SOPs for police in context of missing children.
- Study and report on children labour (up to age of 14) in different perspectives and dynamics in the state for e.g. child labour in communities and regions.
- Identification of cases of child protection and developing detailed cases for filing urgent appeals to NCPCR, SCPCR, SHRC & NHRC, Minority Commission, and ST/SC Commission.
- Capacity building of second liners from the partners on formation timelines and roles of micro level structures like VCPCs, BCPCs under the new ICPS.
- Orientation of second liners on roles of CWCs and JJBs on operational aspects to leverage utilisation in the direct interventions.

The following outcomes have emerged as a result of Hifazat’s interventions:

- The ICPS strategy needs to look at notable issues, namely, no home is available for the children who are without parents and are suffering with HIV/AIDS either at district or divisional level, there are no homes for mentally challenged children, the ICPS bodies do not exist at tehsil/block level and there is no female staff in SJPU for the girls in night. Likewise, an important issue pertains to availability of sponsorship in JJ shelter homes only for a period of 6 months. A total of 25 cases of denial were brought to the notice of the State Government.
- Consultations across districts namely Gwalior, Bina (Sagar), Bhopal Betul have been held with CWC members and other stakeholders on issues ranging from children engaged in begging, those living off on railway platforms and those involved in trafficking.
- Advocacy has been done with the State Government for opening up of short stay or shelter home for about 1200 children.
- Advocacy has also been done for the formation of CWCs where the same are not existent. A report on gaps in the JJ System has been brought out.
- Various practical amendments have been proposed in the JJ Act. These include bringing the CEC under a monitoring body, mandatory registration of all institutions and hostels where children stay for nights, right of the child to complain in case s/he finds the JJB to be intimidating etc.

Theme – III Rights Perspective on Cross-cutting Themes: Food Security, Migration Displacement, Mid-Day Meal, Education, Community Mobilization, Communication & Capacity Building

1. Resource Partnership with Child Rights and You (CRY)

Vikas Samvad has undertaken the following major activities across the cross-cutting themes in resource partnership with CRY:

- ✚ A field visit was carried out to Balaghat district to peek into the conditions of women and children living in the tribal areas. People there suffer from the loss of farmlands and degradation.

- ✚ Network and liaison building has been pursued with like-minded journalists, alliances and concerned organisations who are engaged on the issue of child rights. Contact was established with 25 journalists and their consent was obtained.
- ✚ Desk analysis of election manifestos of 7 political parties was taken up on the issues of child survival, development and protection, food security, Public Distribution System has been carried out and people's expectations were drafted and shared with them.
- ✚ Process has been initiated to have dialogue with newly/pre-/post- elected MLAs regarding child rights and related issues and concerns. Towards this end, preparation of district-wise data related to malnutrition, IMR, MMR, U5MR, NMR, MTPs, anaemia, breast-feeding practices, poverty, maternal deaths, undernutrition, education, Child Sex Ratio, child population, sources of drinking water, and sanitation etc. has been started.
- ✚ Analysis of more than 55000 Madhya Pradesh Assembly questions and debates over the period 2009-2013 has been started. This also includes questions which were not answered. The report is under preparation.
- ✚ RTIs were filed with the Women and Child Development Department, GoMP regarding information on translation done for ECE document and number of malnourished children in the state. The RTI was also filed with General Administration Department, GoMP demanding the documents on the number of certificates issued to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the last five years.
- ✚ Two documents on child labour in MP and working children in India has been prepared and shared with journalists of Harda, Dewas and Bhopal districts.
- ✚ The Eight National Media Conclave was organized in Chanderi in Ashoknagar district of Madhya Pradesh on the issues of tribes in Media. It brought together huge participation of more than 100 media professionals and representatives of self-volunteering groups, social groups coming from across 9 states. The conclave focused the theme of tribes and their livelihood and the process and systems affecting their lifestyles.
- ✚ 18 meetings with Sarpanchs & Panchs were organized so as to increase their leadership capabilities and their participation in health programmes.
- ✚ Involvement in the National Food Security Act rule making process with the Government of Madhya Pradesh has been gone through. Vikas Samvad is the part of a national exercise for making model rules for the implementation of National Food Security Act-2013. This process is being anchored by office of the Supreme Court Commissioners. Specifically, Vikas Samvad was assigned with the responsibility to draft rules for Grievances Redressal Mechanism under the Act.
- ✚ A rapid analysis on Madhya Pradesh Budget 2014-15 was made and shared on select sectors – Nutrition, Child Protection, Health, School Education, Food Security and PDS.
- ✚ The state profile for Madhya Pradesh and that of 17 of its districts have been made on the basis of secondary data. The profiles cover health data for women and children including health, nutrition food security, water and sanitation, education etc. It is uploaded on website and shared with public, local organization and political parties. The data is updated every third month.

✚ Media fellowships are central to the programming by Vikas Samvad. Announced every year in the month of January, these fellowships aim to motivate and catalyse the media journalists for enlightening the developmental issues. The fellowships create the critical mass of journalists who render ears to the issues of the weaker sections and become their voice – something that the mainstream media has been losing the sight and the grip. Almost 62 journalists have so far been awarded with this fellowship programme. This year, four media fellowships have been earmarked and are to dwell on the issues of nutritional security for tribal and dalits, other than those covered in the previous year. The study will remain focused on social, community and cultural system and their status in different situational contexts of malnutrition, food scarcity, security and factors influencing these systems, the changes that have been brought about, their causes and their ways and methods to address these problems. The report will be prepared and compiled focusing on the overall system of tribals and dalits and will be further used for future advocacy. Fellows engaged in have done stories and articles on the issues and have visited their zones to get an intensive insight in to the situation.

2. Bridging the Digital Divide: an Initiative for Digital Empowerment

With support from Ford Foundation, the ICT project is aimed at bridging the digital divide so that the community is not deprived of communication. During the year 2014-2015, the project has achieved the completion of the following major activities:

- Analysis in respect of broadband and broadcast policies as have been in vogue in Madhya Pradesh.
- Conduct of baseline survey, sample Survey, women's survey, focus group discussions, identification of case studies, community profiling and community mapping by field organisations.
- Video documentation of the initiative. The videos capture the issues of poor access to digital technology, status of e-Panchayats, gender divide and day to day struggles with the access to technology at slum and village community level.
- Data analysis and report writing of the initiative. The study documents the status of broadcast and broadband access and associated problems amongst the marginalized sections of the society residing in urban slum and rural villages across five districts exclusively selected for study in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The report has been published in Hindi and English languages.
- An exposure visit to Wainganga Community Development Society, Balaghat, supported by Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) has been undertaken so as to understand the technology employed by DEF to connect 18 Panchayats digitally and identification of the community information needs and means employed to fulfil the same.

- The field teams appointed by partner organizations, working in five districts of Madhya Pradesh were trained for second phase of research and data collection, gap filling exercises to improve the quality of the evidences. The second year included conducting following exercises:
 - Baseline survey, Sample survey, Women survey in remaining two communities in each of the 5 research areas.
 - Selection of one community (village/slum) in each of the five districts for intervention.
 - Filling up the data gaps

The report reflects poor penetration of broadband and broadcast in the research area largely inhabited by marginalized sections of society. With the introduction of policies and plan like Digital India and National e-governance plan, the primary objective is to ensure equal digital access to all. The report reveals an alarming situation with respect to awareness, penetration and ability to use digital technology. The poor planning in setting up digital infrastructures aggravates the problem of digital divide in these areas. This inequality was observed to further widen the existing socio-economic inequalities in the research areas. The report and the field level experiences of research team were shared in the meeting with 40 participants from different civil society organizations, service providers and the new media groups.



